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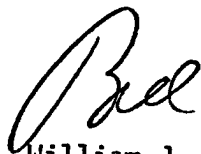
*Memo  
Chrono*

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Richard R. Burt  
Assistant Secretary of State  
for European Affairs

SUBJECT: Use of Intelligence in Public Diplomacy

In connection with our discussions early in the week about the desirability of releasing photography to a publication, I mentioned that the PFIAB had done a study of the use of intelligence in public diplomacy. I thought you would be interested in this report prepared by Leo Cherne and apparently agreed to by all or most of the members.

This is merely an interim answer to your request which we still have under consideration.

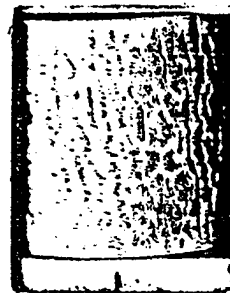


William J. Casey

Attachment:  
As stated

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Inquiry into the Desirability of Declassifying Intelligence  
Materials to Increase Public Understanding of the Nation's  
Foreign Policies

It has been suggested that this Board make an inquiry into the question whether or not excessive classification of foreign intelligence matters unnecessarily impedes public understanding of foreign policy.

There are two separate aspects of this issue. One involves the question of whether there is not an excessive tendency to classify content which should not be restricted and the companion tendency to place too high a classification on otherwise sensitive materials. Except for Point four of this report, this aspect of declassification is not addressed in these pages.

The second aspect, to which this report does respond is the desirability of widening public understanding and support by more freely declassifying or sanitizing sensitive intelligence evidence or analytic studies.

Often, evidentiary material given to the administration by the Intelligence Community helped to provide the basis for particular policies, yet the evidence remains classified and unrevealed. Were much of this material declassified for public availability, the administration could better advance the reasons for what otherwise may be obscure and unpersuasive.

The July 1 New York Times reported the results of a national New York Times/CBS poll in which the opening paragraphs stated:

"Despite months of controversy over United States policies on Central America, most of the American public does not know which side the Reagan Administration supports in either El Salvador or Nicaragua, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News Poll.

"Only 25 percent of those surveyed knew that the Administration supports the Government in El Salvador, only 13 percent knew that it sides with the insurgents in Nicaragua and only 8 percent knew both alignments."

This Board has thus far not undertaken a formal study of the subject nor has a task force been assembled to pursue the question to the point of recommendations to the President. However, the Vice Chairman, assisted by staff member, Randall Fort, has conducted a number of interviews and has examined existing materials which directly relate to this subject.

This subject has been repeatedly studied in depth in the past. A surprisingly substantial bibliography exists containing the content and conclusions of those numerous earlier studies. In short, we are not dealing with a new question.

[No one has advocated that the CIA alter its functioning in any way which would lead to the CIA becoming a party to public debate or in any way altering the objectivity of its analysis in order to support specific foreign policies. What is at issue is the declassification or sanitization of CIA materials in order to enable those who make foreign policy to explain the content and reasons for those policies more clearly and effectively.]

If any change were to occur leading to increased declassification of CIA materials, it would be essential that

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there be clear and explicit standards to guide the CIA in order to assure that it in no way departs from its objectivity and in no way politicizes its findings or jeopardizes its credibility.

#### Important Inhibiting Factors

It is important that the following considerations prevail and that they not be eroded or even appear to be weakened:

1) The security of sources and methods must be inviolate.

It is essential to recognize that what to laymen may seem to be information which in no way reveals sources or methods can to an intelligence professional be dangerously revealing.

2) The perception of the Intelligence Community as a source of totally apolitical objective information and findings must not be sacrificed for an assumed immediate gain in public understanding or support. We must recognize that substantial segments of the public do not entirely believe this to be the case at present. This makes it all the more vital that no change occur which increases that cynicism.

3) The CIA's credibility is one of its most important attributes. Painstaking efforts have been made during recent years to rebuild an effective intelligence capability and restore public confidence in its work. That effort is by no means complete.

President Reagan asked this Board to review the recommendations which PFIAB had made to President Ford calling for specific steps to strengthen our intelligence ability to

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meet the challenges of the eighties. The 1976 PFIAB recommendations to President Ford put the highest priority on the restoration of confidence in the effectiveness and objectivity of the Intelligence Community. Our review of the 1976 conclusions led this Board to advise President Reagan that this objective remains the single most important objective still to be pursued. [We concluded that although some progress toward that end had been made, continuing efforts remain equally valid and central now.]

4) A widespread judgment exists today that there is excessive classification not only of Intelligence Community information and publications but that the same overzealous use of classification exists elsewhere in the Executive Branch. The same judgment about overclassification has been conveyed on several occasions during previous administrations.

This chronic problem includes classifying documents which ought not to be classified at all, and giving a higher level of security classification than is actually warranted by the content of other materials which should be classified. A common fault is the tendency to attract the attention of busy policymakers by escalating the level of appropriate classification. The process is and always has been self-defeating. Excessive classification erodes the respect for the classification system and contributes to the violation of secrecy restraints which are intended by that classification.

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We believe that a review of classification criteria and especially of the appropriateness of their application is long overdue. Such a study is complex, highly specialized and beyond the capability of PFIAB and its staff. The importance of the subject leads us to feel that a Presidentially appointed commission including highly experienced intelligence specialists be created to conduct such a review of our classification problems and practices.

5) The Intelligence Community is not and should not be part of the public debate. The most serious and least considered effect of any weakening of this principle is the deleterious effect it would have on the analysts and others among the staffs of the Intelligence Community who not only highly prize their objectivity but are frequently exhorted to improve the quality of their analysis and estimates. PFIAB has been a demanding force emphasizing this concern.

6) Intelligence must not be trivialized if it is to retain its credibility. The "secrets" are the Intelligence Community's "crown jewels." Their value must not be impaired by enlarging the supply. There is a Gresham's Law in intelligence, as in all other valuable and limited properties.

7) There has been increased public access to intelligence content. In widening the access to intelligence content for public education purposes, we must take into account the fact that a wider use of sanitized intelligence materials has been made during this Administration. Thus, for example, on May 27

of this year, the Department of State and Department of Defense cooperated in the release of an important document entitled "Background Paper: Central America." That paper not only contained many facts which were obviously derived from intelligence sources, but also included a number of aerial photographs designed to demonstrate Soviet and Cuban intervention in Central America. The photos clearly could not have been obtained by other than Intelligence Community means.

The major study of Soviet military strength, "Soviet Military Power," made available to the public, was of a similar character. The recent news that Cuba's top combat general is serving in Nicaragua, while not attributed to the Intelligence Community nevertheless included the judgment of CIA analysts on Cuba's intentions in Nicaragua. Within the last month, CIA and DIA reported a rise in Soviet arms expenditures in 1981 to the Congress. Though this was in the course of a confidential testimony before the Joint Economic Committee, the press was able to report quite explicitly on the content of that confidential testimony. This is a partial, illustrative list of such released CIA material. It was part of a carefully controlled process of "going public." Yet even this limited public availability of intelligence has drawn some sharp Congressional criticism. On March 3, Senator Huddleston said the following in the Senate:

"Mr. President, for the past several years I have become increasingly concerned about the politicization of our country's foreign intelligence and national defense operations. The problem is the selective

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release of national security information to promote particular policies. Sometimes this is done by unauthorized leaks, sometimes as authorized press briefings on a background basis, and sometimes in public statements and reports designed to sell an administration's policies."

It is painful also, but essential, to note that this controlled release of this persuasive intelligence content has in no significant way altered the continuing debate or diminished the continuing skepticism. Meg Greenfield in the Washington Post of April 27, published a sympathetic article, the essence of which is captured in the title and subtitle. Several of her observations are worth quoting.

"A FACT MACHINE WON'T WORK. Our government constructs a legal brief for its foreign policy, but the jury is not impartial.

"'Fact-finding' is a governmental passion. From found facts all else is stubbornly expected to flow. I say 'stubbornly' because the desired result almost never materializes. For the first thing that happens is that a journalist or a congressman will assert that some of the evidence is either overstated or untrue.

["The point is that all this case-making and courtroom argument and laying out of certain facts is a mugs game, a no-win proposition.] This is because a lack of 'evidence' is usually not the problem. What is preventing the acceptance of government's argument by those it seeks to convince is a disposition not to accept it. You can't really argue that out of existence. And even if some part of the factual presentation is accepted, the policy implications government sees in it will not be."

8) On January 14, 1983, NSDD 77 was promulgated. The subject was "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National security." Deputy Director of the NSC



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Robert C. McFarlane in discussing the Administration's programs on public diplomacy made the following statements as quoted in the New York Times:

"the'quickest way to destroy the program was to have any association with the agency. . .

"'Let's not be naive -- if we have the C.I.A. in this we can call it off right off the bat,' Mr. McFarlane said he remembered thinking at the time."

At a State Department briefing, Under Secretary Eagleburger made the following observation:

"I would like now to dispel any notion that this effort somehow involves the Central Intelligence Agency. There is absolutely no CIA connection with this program. Most people in and out of government who have examined this issue over the past few years have correctly concluded that support for democracy and democratic institutions should be open and totally aboveboard.

"We also know that as a practical matter CIA involvement would kill such a program. It would provide those who have much to fear from the spread of democracy a pretext to discredit the entire effort."

Those statements can be interpreted as referring solely to the President's democracy initiatives and the formal public diplomacy programs which exist and are being amplified. Nevertheless, the fact that assurances of CIA's non-participation were required in language so explicit indicates the Administration's awareness that the use of CIA materials for public information purposes is always at some risk, and that the press is likely to react with hostility.

9) The need for wider understanding remains. There is an urgent need, if our foreign policies are to succeed, that

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there be public and Congressional support of those policies. It is clear that there will be occasions and there will be subjects in which no persuasive presentation of vital foreign policies can be made without resort to declassified intelligence content. But the painful fact remains that other than a limited and carefully thought out use of such sanitized evidence risks a kickback injurious to the Intelligence Community. The obstacles which exist and have the effect of eroding understanding and support of certain of our foreign policies remain.

10) Will "evidence" change minds? Advocacy of wider public use of intelligence too readily assumes that inadequate understanding and support of controversial and complex policies will be diminished more than marginally by supplying additional "facts." "If only we were able to tell them all we know!" Any study of the major impediments to adequate public understanding and belief will make it clear that the availability of more "proof" would change little.

The reasons for public cynicism, disbelief, lack of adequate understanding, all of which are painfully real, exist for reasons which wider availability of intelligence would do little to change.

We do believe it urgent that this national syndrome of detachment and disbelief, which so seriously impedes our efforts to strengthen our national security, must be the object of continuing corrective steps. If these are to be

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effective, the nature of the problem must be accurately understood if the remedies, difficult at best, are in fact to have a useful relationship to the problem. An unwise and inappropriate use of intelligence may not only have only tangential relationship to the problem, but may in fact further complicate it. In this connection, one intelligence fact must be emphasized. In sanitizing intelligence information in such a way as to protect sources and methods, the sanitizers will, in most instances, be compelled to remove the very core of what makes the particular information persuasive. Much of what would be made available would still have to be taken on faith.

11) The anatomy of ignorance, misunderstanding and disbelief:

The obstacles, and they are very real, are a sum total of the following factors:

- A. The collapse of what for a period of time was a bipartisan support of foreign policy.
- B. The increasing partisan use and politicization of foreign policy issues in the Congress.
- C. The certainty that these pressures will be increased and made more shrill in the course of a national election campaign.
- D. This same problem has bedeviled presidents of the United States during the last 50 years in virtually every instance in which U.S. military participation overseas existed

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or was suggested. Only the fact of the attack on Pearl Harbor ended the long debate about U.S. intervention in World War II and this was in spite of the historic contribution to bipartisan support by Senator Arthur Vandenberg prior to December 1941.

E. Since 1964, public opinion polls have registered a distressing fact about American public opinion that had not existed previously. The Harris poll in each year since then has made it clear that a majority of the American public does not have high confidence in a single one of our major institutions. These institutions are public and private. They run the gamut from medicine, religion, labor unions, the military, business, the Congress, the Executive Branch and the Supreme Court. While the degree of confidence expressed fluctuates from year to year, in no year have the American people said that they have a high opinion of a single one of these institutions. In some ways, this is the central cultural fact which burdens government, whichever party is in the White House.

F. Allied to the previous fact is an additional cultural change which has been stimulated by events as well as by the media -- the corrosive growth of public skepticism.

G. If none of the previous factors were at play, there remains the massive effect of television's coverage of the news. A partial list of the reasons for this include the following:

1. Television is usually unable to cover the enemy side of a war in which we are involved.

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2. Television is selective in the choice of military actions it decides to cover. Thus, for example, there is substantial coverage of tragedy in Central America but literally none of the exceedingly brutal attacks by the Vietnamese Army on civilian Cambodians on or near the border of Thailand. And TV gives only marginal and intermittent attention to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

3. News, like virtually all else on television, is theater. It is played for dramatic effect. It emphasizes controversy and conflict, protest and disagreement.

4. Television news is part of a calculated competition for audience size and the revenues which go with audience share.

5. Normal journalistic standards are violated during every hour of television news coverage. What is fact, what is opinion, what is contrived are treated identically. And because each news item is a little story, on-scene coverage is invariably accompanied by an editorial ending inserted by the journalist on the scene that "wraps-up" the meaning of the sequence.

6. Even the most impeccable coverage of news developments suffers from one corrosive limitation -- time. Complex events are presented in one-minute slices, leaving the illusion that the news has been covered.

7. Despite these various impediments, or perhaps because of them, we face the critical fact that an overwhelming

majority of Americans, in response to frequent polling, not only say that they rely on television for news coverage far more than newspapers, radio or magazines, but by comparable percentages add that they believe what they have seen and heard on television far more than that which they absorb from the other media.

8. No reference is made here to the more controversial aspect of TV news coverage -- bias and calculated distortion.

H. To all of these previous reasons which attempt to explain why understanding and support of our foreign policies is so difficult to attain a concluding one must be added -- the lingering effects of Watergate and the misperceived and exaggerated role of the Intelligence Community during those events, the details of which were belabored by two Congressional investigation committees.

Conclusion. If the above provide an essentially accurate diagnosis of the impediments to broader public understanding and support of our debated foreign policies, it is important to see which of the above would in a significant way be ameliorated by a larger or more frequent access to intelligence. One must also ask which of the above might conceivably be aggravated by such more frequent access.